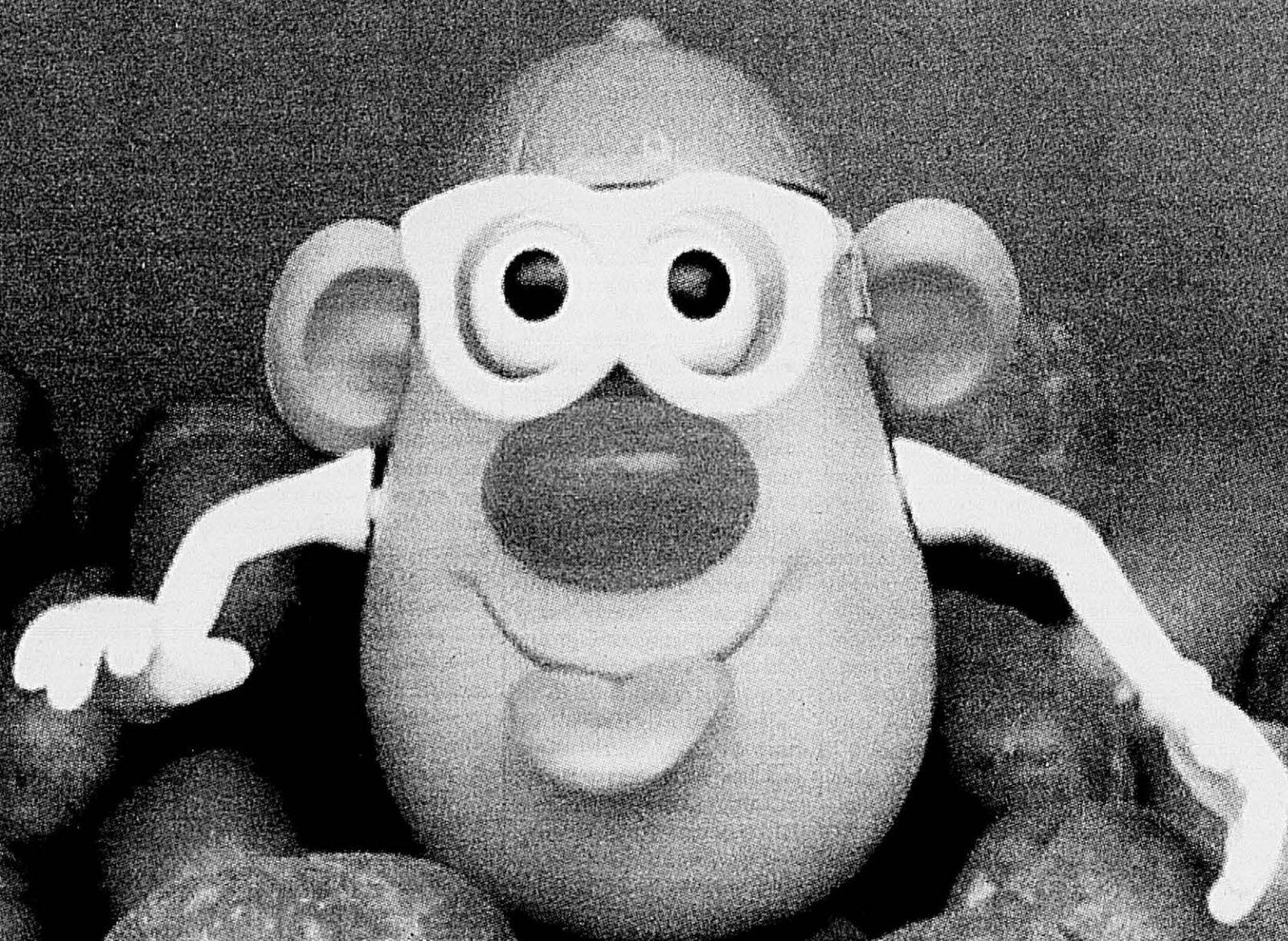


Vol. LXXXIX #15

*your meat and potatoes since 1911*

# CAN YOU SPOT THE GENETICALLY MODIFIED POTATO?

It's not always this easy. Story on pg. 6



## News •

Fighting hatred: Anti-racist Action's anti-Nazi rally, pg. 3

## Culture •

Animation extravaganza rocks the duck, pg. 4



# Quebec : A Quiet Evolution?

*Academics reach an almost total consensus on cultural pluralism*

BY JULIEN LAPLANTE

An audience of five hundred packed Moyse Hall last Friday, as Penser la Nation Québécoise, a conference organized by McGill's Quebec Studies Program, kicked off. Following a series of articles this summer in *Le Devoir*, the conference featured three workshops highlighting the topic of understanding the Québécois nation.

Most interesting among the workshops was one led by Charles Taylor, Gérard Bouchard, Gilles Bourque, and Serge Cantin. The event saw Taylor, a leading philosopher known for his uniquely balanced view on nationalism, square off with Cantin, a philosopher based at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières who offered a radically different view.

And while much of the discussion was spent on semantic argumentation, ultimately, a consensus was reached among the panelists: A pluralist nation, and a global and inclusive vision of the nation which perfectly fits within the politically correct and globalization theory mold which holds that nations should be transformed from outside by being open to all influences.

The Québécois nation has often been defined by the French language, most of the time presented as in direct opposition to English – the 'since-1759' threat. However, Taylor does not believe French to be threatened in any major ways in Montreal since a tremendous progress seems to have been made, starting with the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s.

"The question is to know whether we want to keep French as a public language or if we want to make sure that the native francophones remain the majority," said Taylor. He thinks that French should remain Quebec's language, but not to the point of using legal tools such as Bill 101, which, he says, poses and imposition on Quebecers who are otherwise unwilling to use French.

"In order to build a common political identity, it is necessary that the defence of the language be not identified as what some ultranationalists do to a sacred legal

text," wrote Taylor in a *Le Devoir* article. And on Friday, he joined the other panelists in calling for an open Québec society where "[newcomers] will have their say in the redefinition of a new country."

McGill's leading philosopher asks Québec not to fall into the primordialist trap since there is no need for it. "Even the most liberal societies can be tempted to hold to some traditional forms, supposedly foundational," puts Taylor. Since the fear that French could be eliminated is without any basis, according to recent statistics looking at French as a public language, Taylor thinks that Quebec can evolve without the constant fear of losing its essence.

But Cantin contended with Taylor's analysis. "I am an old Québécois neo-nationalist," he declared at the beginning of his speech. Criticizing the analysis of his colleagues, which he said, tended to dilute the concept of a founding francophone people within a greater cultural patchwork, Cantin explained that today's brand of Québec nationalism, is still a survivalist expression. "I deem that not only are we still within the survivalist nationalism phase... but that we are maybe in the process of forgetting the reasons for which we had conceived the Révolution Tranquille project for getting out of that survivalism."

And while presenting himself as the defender of the "pure laine" francophone segment of the Quebec society, Cantin is still for the inclusion of the other communities within the greater provincial culture as long as these cultures do not water down the originality of what constitutes the francophone québécois culture. He fears that a multicultural approach could prevent Québec from ever getting out of that survivalism, which would eventually lead to some form of total "Louisianization of Québec," where French would be reduced to folklore.

Gérard Bouchard, a sociologist from the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, put forward a republican concept of the nation. "A membership framework opened to all the members of the Quebec society, independently of their political opinions or of their ethnic or religious convictions, so

that no citizen is a priori excluded," he explained. Like the other panelists, Bouchard exposed the civic nationalism thesis and opposed the concept of ethnic nationalism, which puts much emphasis on the descent of the citizen. According to the academic, he said, this is "a model leading to compartmentalization." Gilles Bourque, sociology professor at the Université de Montréal, joined Bouchard, pleading too for a multinational and multicultural society.

Bouchard called for the constitution of a national coalition assembling francophones, anglophones, native people, and the cultural communities. "The québécois culture shall be made from the concentration in French of the cultural patchwork, from which will rise in the long term a new collective configuration," Bouchard wrote this summer.

He thinks that the survivalist nationalism has been the principal hurdle to the integration of the anglophone and cultural communities within the larger Québec cultural framework. "Until recently, the national history has been told in an activist mode, within the spirit of survivalism." Bouchard believes that by getting rid of this world view, the small nation within the larger one should become much more willing to get involved and integrated, though he also pointed out that this scenario remains hypothetical.

Had Cantin not been there, it seemed doubtful that a true debate would have emerged however, with the other three panelists presenting more or less similar ideas. And ultimately, the debate was between Bouchard and Cantin, although both define themselves as indépendantiste.

The PEQ and *Le Devoir* have said they plan to hold more conferences of this type given the success they met with this first one. And although there were critics saying that they were tired of constantly hearing about nationalism, the conference was not without an audience. In addition to the five hundred gathered in Moyse, the conference was broadcasted on the Internet. A sound archive is now available as well at [www.cibl.cam.org/nation.htm](http://www.cibl.cam.org/nation.htm).

## A New Spin on Old Demands

*McGill administration sells discussion paper*

BY BEN ERRETT

There's a definite tension between the Quebec government's preferences and McGill's needs, said Principal Bernard Shapiro.

Shapiro was detailing the "Tradition and Innovation: An International University in a City of Knowledge" discussion paper currently being circulated in the McGill community at Tuesday's University Senate meeting.

"The government tells us to do whatever we want with our core budget," said Shapiro. "They're interested in new projects. The problem is, the university needs new core funding more than anything else."

Shapiro's solution to this dilemma is a series of new projects that play to McGill's traditional strengths by recombining existing programs under catchy new names. Terms such as "interdisciplinary" and "knowledge-based economy" are ubiquitous in the discussion paper.

"We had to establish programs that supplement core funding while letting the government see new things."

Vice Principal Academic Luc Vinet repeated the presentation of the discussion paper that has been given to the editorial boards of *The Gazette*, *La Presse* and *Le Devoir*.

Prefacing his presentation, Vinet acknowledged that the views presented were not necessarily representative of the university as a whole.

"This is a working document. The university has not been formally consulted, and it no doubt could be much improved upon."

Vinet said that the purpose of the paper is simply to provide the Minister of Education with some ammunition to use in fighting for increased post-secondary education funding in cabinet. However, he also noted that it provided a welcome stimulus for debate on McGill's future.

In his presentation, Vinet repeatedly emphasized the need for a reinvestment of at least \$500 million into Quebec universities.

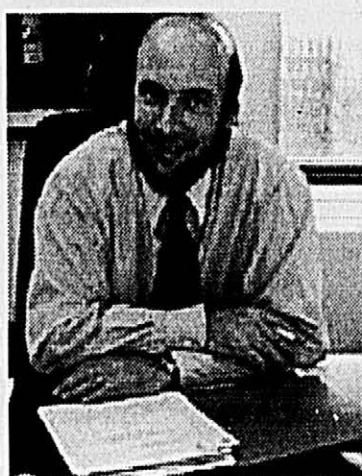
"McGill's revenue per student is the lowest among the top 10 universities in Canada. To keep pace and cut the gap, we need on average

\$4000 more per student. This adds up to \$80 million for McGill, and assuming that we are 15 per cent of the Quebec student body, we need a minimum of 500 million restored to core funding."

Vinet itemized the university's strengths, including a recent ranking as the best university in Canada in a Gallup poll. He went on to briefly address the various initiatives outlined in the document. (see sidebar)

Shapiro concluded the presentation by noting that the goal was to finalize the document by November 15, the date set by the Ministry of Education. He noted that although it appeared that the Ministry was behind in their schedule, McGill would try to meet the necessary deadlines.

"I'm trying to keep us on their schedule, but we'll take more time if we can get it."



"This is a working document. The university has not been formally consulted, and it no doubt could be much improved upon" – VP Luc Vinet

### Key Proposals from *Tradition and Innovation: An International University in a City of Knowledge*

- An increase in academic staff in the area of information technology.
- The establishment of a centre for the development and application of information technologies to undergraduate studies in general and humanities programs in particular.
- Academic programs in the domains of genomics/proteomics, drug design and bioinformatics.
- The establishment of a national institute for theoretical physics based

on the infrastructure of the mathematical research institutes.

- The establishment of a statistical analysis laboratory with special emphasis on the social sciences, thereby facilitating our participation in SSHRC and STAT CAN initiatives.

- An internship component to be developed where applicable with industry participation.

- That universities be allowed to set and keep differential (and higher) fees for highly restricted programs such as medicine and dentistry.

- That the government provides a greater number of scholarships and bursaries for graduate students, including increasing the quota of fee exemptions for international graduate students from 10 percent to 25 percent.

- That the Ministry of Education fund post-doctoral students at a level equivalent to the operating overhead revenue allocated for other students.

The complete document can be found as a link on [www.mcgill.ca](http://www.mcgill.ca).

Feedback is welcomed in *The Daily* ([mcgilldaily@hotmail.com](mailto:mcgilldaily@hotmail.com))

...endnotes...endnotes...endnotes

A weekly forum of views on the news  
Mondays in the

**McGill Daily**

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# Anti-racists Take on Hate Crimes in Montreal

*Anti-Racist Action gathers at Palais de Justice to support victims*

BY JON BRICKER

Anti-racists flooded the front steps of the downtown Palais de Justice on Tuesday to deliver a message that they were prepared to thwart neo-nazism and hate crimes by almost any means necessary.

The mobilization saw dozens of supporters of the militant Anti-Racist Action (ARA) coalition gather in front of the court building, while several more crowded a courtroom to witness the trial of eight men charged with a long list of offences in a series of assaults in January of last year.

The eight men, linked with Montreal neo-Nazi gangs, Vinland Hammer Skins and Berzerker Boot Boys, were arrested last September after investigators implicated them in at least 4 brutal attacks in which at least 30 victims were injured. After pleading guilty to the terms of a plea bargain, the eight left the Palais de Justice out a rear entrance, avoiding confrontation with the activists.

"The Nazis ran like the cowards they are," shouted one ARA organizer to the crowd gathered outside the courthouse. And besides the support from the demonstrators outside, several more sat in on the trial in a show of support for the victims.

"Imagine if you were a victim who was pepper-sprayed and beaten with a baseball bat just because, say, you're Vietnamese, and trying to testify with twenty-five neo-nazis staring at you," said Holly, an ARA organizer who would not give her last name. She noted that the pre-trial saw a number of friends of the defendants present who intimidated witnesses.

The ARA has also said the event also marked an effort to raise public awareness of a justice system that fails to deal with hate crimes seriously. "I don't think we really believe in the justice system," said Mark, another ARA member. "These people are getting away with a slap on the wrist."

The eight offenders in this case agreed to a plea bargain, which saw them plead guilty to 60 charges, reduced from 240, with a recommended sentence of three months in jail, to be served on weekends. In addition to the assaults, the offenders were also found to be in possession of extensive Nazi propaganda, assault rifles with silencers, and several kilos of marijuana.

"The justice system ignores the fact that these are hate crimes and they can't be ignored. These guys had stored ammunition, Nazi propaganda, assault rifles. It's much more serious than just some bar raids," said Holly.

But the ARA has not been without condemnation, with critics saying that the ARA brand of militancy has seen the group trying to take justice into its own hands. Tuesday's event even saw one organizer shouting, "Justice will be done,

either in court, or on the streets."

"I don't think they'll even be accepted," said Wolfgang Droege, a representative for the Heritage Front, a known white-supremacist organization in Toronto. "They would actually go and damage property or assault people," he added, pointing to a 1993 firebombing of Heritage Front member, Gary Schipper's house.

"People have started to realize they've just gone too far," said Droege. "The liberals they attracted have become disillusioned."

But Holly said that a confrontational approach is the only way to drive home the ARA mandate, faced with the growing ranks of the neo-Nazi movement. "Part of our work in the ARA is to confront Nazis wherever they go," Holly said. "If they're going to organize in the streets, we're going to organize there too. They want to feel like they can intimidate you."

ARA supporter Mark added that events like this week's showed an opportunity for a less confrontational approach to combating racists. "I don't think that people were there to get into a brawl," he said, pointing to raising awareness through education as a key part of the ARA mandate.

But Droege saw no role for the ARA in the current climate, where, he says, groups like the Heritage Front are already low key. "We have to have a message that will attract the average white Canadian," he



Celine Heinbecker

*Anti-racist flaunts message*

to a string of hate crimes in Canada in the US in the last year.

The event also raised questions about why many of the anti-racist activists covered their faces and were unwilling to provide press with their real names. Holly says that activists have reason to fear being photographed and kept on file by local police and racist organizations.

"We do want to stand up to them, but at the same time, when people are being beat up in subway stations, it makes sense to cover up your face. People have to worry about personal security," she explained, pointing the murders of two anti-racist activists in Las Vegas last summer.

Montreal's ARA Chapter also made waves in February last year when they mobilized against a

concert being organized by the Montreal-based Vinland Hammer Skins. The local chapter joins dozens of chapters throughout Canada, the US, and Europe in identifying the anti-racist mandate, leading rallies, preventing neo-Nazi gatherings, and publicly outing known neo-Nazis.

Jonathan Côté, Claude Brunet, Daniel Brunet, Mathieu Dubois, Alain Letarte, Steve Lavallée, Sylvain Quiron, and Brant Smith pled guilty on Tuesday, a year after 240 charges were first laid. Following the guilty

pleas, ARA organizers encouraged ralliers to return for sentencing on the case. The sentencing hearing is scheduled for Thursday October 14th.

"Some people don't believe that Nazis even exist in Canada," Mark said, pointing

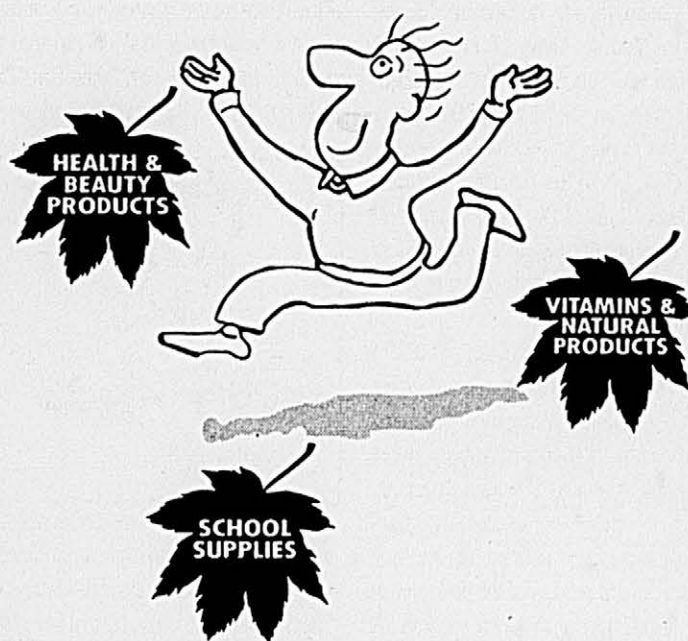


*Anti-racists hoist a banner outside Palais de Justice*

Celine Heinbecker

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# Cartoon Extravaganza

## Cinemathèque québécoise presents the history of animation

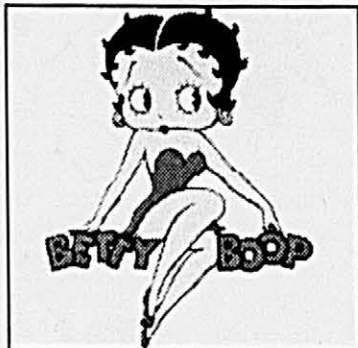
BY DANIELLE HOFFMAN

The new permanent exhibit at the Cinemathèque québécoise, "Forms in Motion, Views of Animation," promises you "an exhibit that is as animated as the art itself." With a fascinating three-part display that includes numerous video clips, lots of fun hands-on activities, and descriptions of the development and vibrant history of animated film—a history that, unlike the dry textbook kind, you'll actually enjoy learning.

The exhibit begins with a section titled "It Moves, But How?" This portion contains much of the history in the show, beginning with early novelty animation and continuing with Emile Reynaud, a nineteenth century French inventor who created the praxinoscope—those familiar drum-like revolving theaters. Several replicas of the device are at hand, including one in which you can get creative and create your own strip of animated film; past visitors have created everything from a blossoming flower to a person explod-

ing into bits.

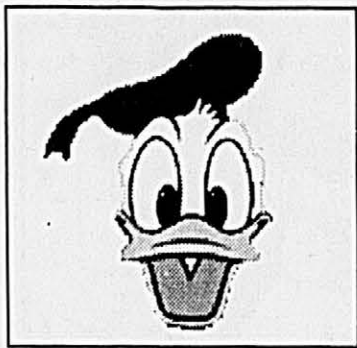
Next came the animascope, and a model of this device created specifically for the exhibit has a hand crank that you can turn to watch the frames of the 1977 short film "The Sandcastle" go by. Finally, a little panel speaks



of the current trends of computer animation, and you can create your own mini-cartoon on a handy computer terminal. Clearly, the "hands-on" aspect is emphasized here, and this seems to make the historic part of the exhibit more enjoyable and interesting.

The highlight of the next section, "A

Living Room Full of Stars," is a mosaic of various animated characters—from well-known characters like Sylvester, Betty Boop, and Asterix to unfamiliar names and faces, such as Gerald McBoing-Boing or Captain Katzenjammer. The center of the mosaic con-



tains a television screen displaying multiple excerpts from cartoon features—a very funny Bugs Bunny and Elmer Fudd in "The Rabbit of Seville," and a surreal early Felix cartoon, with the famous cat getting very drunk and experiencing some bizarre hallucinations.

On numerous walls around the exhibit

are panels detailing important periods of cartoon animation, including diverse original drawings, animation cells, and the like—the Pre-War era with Mutt, Jeff and Felix, the "Hollywood Invasion" with Mr. Magoo and even a propaganda poster from World War II with Donald Duck impersonating Hitler.

As I began to wonder at the lack of French or Canadian animation stories, I found that the next two displays contain both Quebecois animation (like the Madeline stories) and French (La Bande à Ovide). The final perk to this exhibit was a massive collection of the "by-products" of cartoons—an amusing accumulation of items like books, stamps, stuffed toys, Fruity Pebbles, a Wallace and Gromit alarm clock, and even a Simpsons chess set, on which Bart declares, "En garde, man!"

The third and final portion of the presentation goes into more detail about some of the processes of animation. It begins with "cameraless animation," in which

images are scratched directly on the film, and proceeds through such lesser known processes as the pinscreen, sand animation, or even paint animation, in which swirls of color are carefully placed and moved about during photography, before the paint can dry, to create an image. A few more video screens display examples of these, among other more "arty" animation techniques, and we are given the history of several notable people in animation—Norman McLaren, creator of the Animation Service of the Film Board of Canada in the 1930s, and Walt Disney, among numerous others.

If you have any interest in animation or film, or even just enjoy watching Saturday morning cartoons, I recommend that you visit this delightful exhibit. The organizers have put together a comprehensive, well planned presentation, addressing almost all areas of animation and its engaging history.

## Fantasy and the Art of Montreal

BY NIKKI BISHOP

Angels. Butterflies. Deities. Dogs. What do these have in common? Welcome to the Montreal art scene. October 8 saw the opening of a joint exhibition attended by Mr. Jaime Garcia, the Consul General of Mexico. Featured artists Guillermo Robles and Ulf Spiller de Hausenchild's juxtaposition of styles was a visual spectacle.

Disenchanted with his profession as an engineer, de Hausenchild, a self-taught artist, has explored a variety of forms of expression over the past thirty years. Establishing his studio in 1969, de Hausenchild's works have been shown in numerous exhibitions in Montreal, as well as Toronto, Berlin, and Yokohama.

Currently he is showing a series of paintings, along with a collection of sculpture and three-dimensional art that incorporate playful and colourful subject matter, which he admits is "difficult to describe in one sentence." Painting with acrylic in bright colours, his shapes appeal to the inner child in all.

The "Wall Street Dancer" differs from the

other pieces through its play on perspective. A clown-like tightrope walker is depicted high above the city streets. Or so one thinks—



at first. Upon a second glance, he appears to be solidly on the ground, as the onlooker's perspective is directly above the scene. So one simultaneously experiences a man travelling above the city as well as a man walking a thin line between city skyscrapers. Fantasy is ingrained with a drop of reality.

Artist Guillermo Robles also enjoys exploring the world of fantasy. Having always found inspiration in the realms of magic, prophecy, religious curses and esotericism, he captures the essence of creativity on canvas. When asked about the process of creating his

### Mexican art featured at Belgo Building

images, this ex-architect confided that "to paint is very different from making a plan." Speaking through a translator, Robles explained that the creative process starts with a face, representing humanity. Eventually the rest of the space will become filled with richly detailed decoration.

Stunning and passionate are the two words best suited to describe his works. A combination of Chinese ink and water-colour provides fuel for the elaborate details.

These portraits of mythical characters seem to capture a glimpse of another world. "Poetry angels" has a woman adorned in gloriously colourful, imaginative textiles, holding three pink roses to her breast. "They represent the essence, presence and potency of poetry," offered Robles. "You also see the Trinity." Symbolism is ever present, ultimately bringing into question the distinction between reality and illusion.

The exhibition continues until October 31 at 372 St. Catherine West (suite 318). Robles will be constructing an 'Altar de Muertos' (Day of the Dead altar), paying homage to fellow Mexican artists on October 22.

## THE ART DUMMY

### In Praise of Original Art

BY JOHN ORTVED

"Posterity weaves no garlands for imitators."  
—Friedrich Von Schiller (German Poet/Historian)

I don't usually get a chance to admire the scenery from trains, but I happened to nab a window seat on my return from Toronto this Monday. I was traveling with an unusually large amount of luggage; a condition resulting from the theft of furniture and related items that I decided would complement my rez room. One such piece that impeded me was a large canvas, covered in tape, a painting from a friend back home. The painting, a dark and sinister piece, now hangs above my fireplace. Its simple array of colours include black and red while the image displays a vicious hound, surrounded by angry scribbling and a message from the artist in writing, "Here's to the days when dogs ran wild."

The picture is simple, honest and is the only thing adding any texture to my room. It may not be Monet, but it is original, personal and I have the only copy in existence.

In the world of residence, where VanGogh's Café and Sunflowers reign supreme, a little originality goes a long way. There is nothing wrong with posters of art, or movie posters for that matter. Pulp Fiction, Reservoir Dogs, Scarface and other college cult favorites by no means detract from the décor of a room; it's just that everyone else has them too.

Here's To The Days When Dogs Ran Wild\* has breathed new life into my own room, like a shiny new shotgun to a dusty old gun rack. I am no longer ashamed to invite people over. I have something to show off.

There is at least one artist on every floor. There are at least four canvases to every room. Find the artists; let them use your walls.

Quality holds little importance. Originality is the key. I am confident that the artist of Here's To The Days When Dogs Ran Wild will someday be famous. When he does, I will have an original, which I will sell. Deal with the blank spaces on your walls, but do Friedrich Von Schiller proud. Resist the temptation to posterize. Go for posterity instead.

Find an artist, give them a paintbrush, and let the dogs run wild.

\*Here's To The Days When Dogs Ran Wild, is being exhibited in my room: Douglas Hall, Building G, room 31-4. Times of exhibition are subject to whether I'm in or not. There is no cover charge, but wine and cheese will not be served.



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# Shining Faces of Hollywood

*Edward Steichen's Vanity Fair Portraits on view at the Cinematheque Quebecois through November 28*

BY SARAH COHEN

A mysterious Charlie Chaplin without his trademark mustache and black hat; a noticeable twinkle in Mary Pickford's eyes; the unmistakable beauty of Greta Garbo — these are among the many such photos of Hollywood stardom of the 1920's and 30's on display now at the Cinematheque Quebecois.

The exhibit, composed of portraits taken by Edward Steichen is part of Montreal's Mois de la Photo and offers a clear example of the photograph as a mass medium in our culture.

Many of Hollywood's ruling elite of the period are featured in this exhibition, from

Marlene Dietrich and Fay Wray to Gloria Swanson and Orson Welles. These portraits are not just a display of the once glorious, truly royal 'golden age' of the film industry. They also help expose the American public's consuming fascination with celebrity and fame.

It was during this era that Americans truly needed an outlet from their daily woes. As the country and the world were recovering from the travesties of the first World War and then the hardships of the Great Depression, people needed an escape. The fantastic world of the cinema provided that momentary retreat from real life. People escaped into their daydreams while looking at the elegant Fred Astaire dancing into infinite happiness with Ginger Rogers. Viewers lived the ideal life merely by watching The Myrna Loy incarnation of the perfect spouse in the perfect family.

Because of images like these actors and actresses were literally adored and venerated. The American public had incredible

expectations of these personas, and the prosperous movie houses did their best to help generate this kind of ideal.

Steichen was a part of this effort. He

a particular glance, while carefully arranging their postures, gestures and clothes to infuse their bodies and faces with a certain virtual immortality.

Steichen was America's first photographer of Style and celebrity. He worked at Vanity Fair, the unrivaled magazine of culture and society during the years between the World Wars. In 1923, the magazine heralded Edward Steichen as the 'greatest portrait photographer'. He received this great recognition because of his impeccable perception of the photography as mass medium. Through his art, Steichen helped in the creation of many of the icons of his age: Helen Hayes, Janet Gaynor, Joan Crawford, Gary Cooper and many others.

The photos are mounted in a dark hall-like room that itself feels like a theater. By recreating the sense of a cinema and arranging the black and white photographs on a stark and bare background, the monumentality of the stars is evoked. One of the most

memorable portraits is the one of Gloria Swanson. In it Steichen took a black veil and covered most of Swanson's face with it. Immortalized by the camera, he grasped this wonderful and deep gaze, darkened by the veil, giving her a shaded and bewitching face.

Other photographs are more candid and seem less contrived. However, this is an illusion. Every detail in the photo was carefully arranged by the photographer. Hence, he succeeded in showing these celebrities in their truest most simple beauty, as in the Greta Garbo and Charlie Chaplin photographs.

Through these portraits the exhibit gives a broad survey of the theme of star gazing and the power of the photo. During the years between the World Wars Hollywood actors experienced a deification that is very different from how celebrities are perceived today. Their monumentality was both produced and captured by photos such as these.

*The exhibit can be seen between 1 and 6 PM, Thursday through Sunday. Admission is free on Wednesdays, from 6 to 8:30 PM. The Cinematheque Quebecois is located at 335 de Maisonneuve E.*



worked as a commercial photographer and knew how to stress the mythological aspects of his subjects. He photographed them from different angles, trying to catch

ing the sense of a cinema and arranging the black and white photographs on a stark and bare background, the monumentality of the stars is evoked. One of the most

Artists, writers, photographers, therapists, cartoonists, clairvoyants, columnists, book-reviewers, copy editors, layout gurus and/or 'heavies', polymaths, bibliophiles, members of Mensa, contraceptives, office cleaners, computer geeks and/or nerds, caterers, CD reviewers, masseurs, on-spot artists, ombudspeople, hot wax enthusiasts, polygraph interpreters, entymologists and/or etymologists, owners of 'I'd rather be 40 than pregnant' mugs, lackeys, tattoo artists, Macintosh enthusiasts, Aaron Williams, haberdashers, pettyfoggers, crustaceans, petting-zoo maintenance personnel, llamas, guinea pigs, anteaters, antelopes, zebras, ubiquitous q

REPORT WITHOUT DELAY TO THE MCGILL DAILY OFFICE AT SHATNER B-03

## THE MCGILL DAILY

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# "Frankenfoods" Haunt UK and Europe

*North Americans still in the dark*

BY ZACH DUBINSKY

On August 10, 1998, Arpad Pusztai, a Hungarian-British scientist, announced on the UK television show *World In Action* that Britons were being used as "guinea pigs" for the biotechnology industry.

Pusztai claimed that he had shown in experiments that feeding rats genetically modified (GM) potatoes for only ten days caused a reduction in brain size, liver damage, a weakening of the immune system, and problems in the development of the kidneys, thymus, spleen and gut. The public outcry was immediate and devastating. But in announcing his results on national television, Pusztai fatally circumvented the standard audit for scientific research - peer review in an academic journal.

When it was realized that he had likely erred, the action taken against the 68-year-old biochemist was similarly immediate and devastating. The world expert on lectins - a type of plant toxin - was forced to resign from his research position at the Rowett Research Institute in Aberdeen, Scotland.

But it was too late. A paranoid British public, fed by a sensationalist media, forced politicians to call for a ban on all GM foods, which had become dubbed "Frankenstein Foods," or simply "Frankenfoods."

The Rowett Institute tried desperately to quell popular fears, and even succeeded for a time. "He [Dr. Pusztai] got carried away," stated publicly the director of the Institute, Professor Philip James. "We cannot assume that he is guilty of anything other than, in his terms, of course, inadvertently misleading us and the whole of the world."

Professor James and a cohort of Pusztai detractors, which included some of the scientist's own research collaborators, questioned whether Pusztai had actually proven what he claimed.

First, they pointed out that the experiments hadn't actually tested GM potatoes, but rather regular potatoes mixed with a special protein that GM potatoes could be designed to carry in order to repel harmful insects. They then maintained that Pusztai had confused the toxic protein used in his experiments - concanavalin A, a lectin which would never be used in human food - with a safer one, GNA, that GM potatoes actually produce. Finally, toxicologists who analysed Pusztai's data determined that all the rats had been greatly undernourished, which was the more likely cause of the deformities observed.

Sir Robert May, chief scientific adviser to the UK government, was among the critics. "To draw sweeping conclusions of a general kind from this is like mixing cyanide in vermouth, finding it's poisonous, and then deciding you should ban mixed drinks," he said. But other scientists weren't so sure. Last February, at least twenty publicly stated their support for Dr. Pusztai.

One of them, Liverpool University toxicopathologist Vyvyan Howard, affirmed the validity of Pusztai's methods and conclusions. "We find that his data are sound. We think it would pass peer review and be published." Another, Ronald Finn, former president of the British Society of Allergy and Environmental Medicine, noted the implications of the research. "Dr Pusztai's results to date at the very least raise the suspicion that genetically modified potatoes may damage the immune system."

The British public was thus launched back into its frenzy. Initially, the uproar limited itself to human health concerns surrounding GM food. This was easy to understand. British and European distrust towards food tampering had been provoked by a succession of nutrition nightmares: the outbreak of Mad Cow Disease in the UK, the dioxin scare in Belgium, and Coca-Cola's mishap in the Low Countries and France.

But very shortly thereafter, the focus shifted to include the environment, and the pandemic widened as concerns about biodiversity, antibiotic resistance, and ecological damage proliferated. Corporations, scientists, politicians, and environmentalists scrambled to get the upper hand in the situation. Noting widespread distrust of GM food, several companies opted to one-up the already relatively stringent European Union laws - and each other - and entirely eliminate GM ingredients from their products.

"We continue to believe that responsible use of GM will bring improvements for the consumer, the producer, and the farmer," stated François-Xavier Perroud, vice-president of communications for Nestlé. But Peter Brabeck-Letmathe, Nestlé's president, argued that "we can't impose on consumers products that they



Dr. Arpad Pusztai

refuse." Nestlé's UK foods are GM-free.

Likewise, British supermarket chain Sainsbury's proudly announced in July that it had become "the first major UK supermarket to eliminate genetically modified ingredients from its own-brand products." Competitors Tesco, Safeway, Iceland, and Marks & Spencer were not far behind.

The case in Britain largely mirrors that of the rest of Europe. Italy, Austria, and Luxembourg for a time maintained total bans on genetically modified foods

in defiance of European Commission rules. Radical opponents of GM have attacked test crops in France and Germany. Polls show that 80 percent of Europeans don't want GM foods and that, if they can't be systemically avoided 90 percent want them labelled.

And where European public opinion has gone, European Union laws have followed. GM labelling laws in the EU went from obligatory disclosure only of possible allergens and ethical sticky points (if a GM ingredient was derived from an animal, for example) to mandatory labelling of all GM foods containing engineered protein or DNA. The process of approval for novel foods is now twofold: first, a biotech company must apply to each individual country in which it wishes to cultivate its seeds, and second, it must apply to each country to which it wants to sell the resulting food.

These strict regulations have immensely frustrated GM-exporting North American farmers. In Ontario, corn growers have had to sort out the usually-mixed GM and non-GM strains to facilitate getting any crop into Europe. South of the border, it is expected that 5 percent of this fall's entire US maize crop will be inadmissible to EU markets on technical grounds, a fact that will cost US farmers \$300 million in export sales.

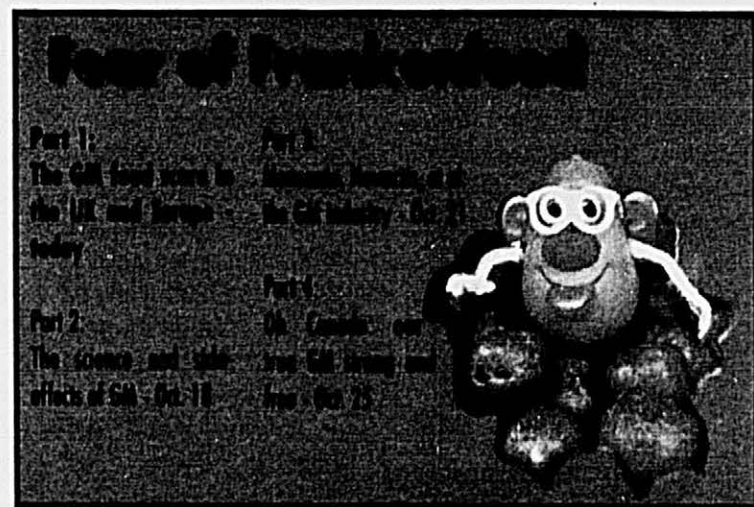
Consequently, Canadian and American trade officials have threatened to challenge the EU at the World Trade Organization. They argue that the EU laws are tantamount to a technical barrier to trade and are not based on sound science. But an outright trade war has so far been averted because the EU hasn't actually withheld approval for the import or cultivation of any GM product (though individual nations, notably France, have). What Europe has managed to do is to slow down the approval process in the justifiable name of caution.

The tight rules for the sluggish spread of GM food in Europe contrast sharply to the case here in North America, where GM has achieved phenomenal, near-unchecked growth since its introduction to consumer markets in 1995. Genetically modified canola will comprise about 70 percent of this year's harvest on both sides of the Canada-U.S. border, GM soybeans 55 percent, GM cotton 50 percent, and GM maize about 40 percent. They remain entirely unlabelled, and largely unnoticed.

And new products are gaining a foothold. Between GM tomatoes, potatoes, and squash, biotechnology leader Monsanto Inc. expects the market to double this year. Presently 60% of all the processed food we eat is affected by biotechnology - lecithin, canola oil, vegetable oil, corn syrup and many other ingredients is GM unbeknownst to the vast majority of North Americans. Soon whole vegetables will come with less starch, more vitamins, and unknown health and environmental risks.

What we'll see in the next three weeks is that we are finding out more and more about these risks, and slowly our continent is catching the European anti-GM fever. Next week we look at the scientific details of genetic engineering,

followed by a survey of some of the corporations involved in the industry. Our series will finish with an examination of the "rude awakening" of North American citizens and legislators to the biotech reality.



## TIMELINE of UK and EUROPEAN EVENTS:

- **August, 1998:** Hungarian-British biochemist Dr. Arpad Pusztai, a plant toxin researcher at the Rowett Research Institute in Aberdeen, Scotland, announces in an interview on British TV's *World In Action* programme that he finds it "very, very unfair to use our fellow citizens as guinea pigs."
- **Later that week:** Dr. Pusztai is dismissed from his post. The initial paranoia is somewhat quelled as Pusztai himself acknowledges he may have made a mistake.
- **September, 1998:** In France, the country's highest administrative court bans the sale of GM corn on the grounds that the French government had provided insufficient assurances of the product's health safety.
- **February, 1999:** Twenty international scientists publicly state their support for Dr. Pusztai's conclusions. The hysteria begins anew.
- **February, 1999:** McDonald's, Burger King, and Kentucky Fried Chicken announce that they will be eliminating GM ingredients from their foods.
- **March, 1999:** A consortium of seven of Europe's largest supermarket chains, including Britain's Marks & Spencer and Sainsbury's, meets to discuss possible united efforts to eliminate GM ingredients from their own-brand products.
- **April, 1999:** PM Tony Blair calls on his Chief Science Advisor, Sir Robert May, and his Chief Medical Officer, Professor Liam Donaldson, to examine the safety of GM foods.
- **April, 1999:** Responding to consumer demands, multinational food giants Unilever and Nestlé announce that they will no longer use GM ingredients in their UK products. Cadbury-Schweppes follows suit.
- **May, 1999:** Sir Robert and Professor Donaldson publish their report. They conclude: "There is no current evidence to suggest that the GM technologies used to produce food are inherently harmful. We are reassured by the precautionary nature and rigour of the current procedures used to assess the safety of individual GM foods."
- **May, 1999:** Three reports are released by different British organisations. In one, the British Medical Association calls for a moratorium on commercial GM crop planting. In the second, the UK Select Committee on Science and Technology pronounces that it has "seen no evidence...to justify a moratorium." The final one contains six independent, anonymous reviews commissioned by the Royal Society on Dr. Pusztai's experimental data. The Society concludes that Dr. Pusztai's work "is flawed...and that no conclusions should be drawn from it."
- **May, 1999:** Citing newly published research by American entomologist John Losey of Cornell University, the European Union suspends the applications for three new species of GM maize. Dr. Losey had reported in the journal *Nature* that monarch butterfly caterpillars were killed by GM-maize pollen in a laboratory.
- **August, 1999:** Dr. Pusztai announces that his research with toxic potatoes will be peer reviewed and published in the journal *The Lancet*.
- **Present:** A de facto British moratorium on new GM products will run until at least the spring of 2000. Already being sold on UK markets, however, are GM tomato puree, GM maize, and GM soya.

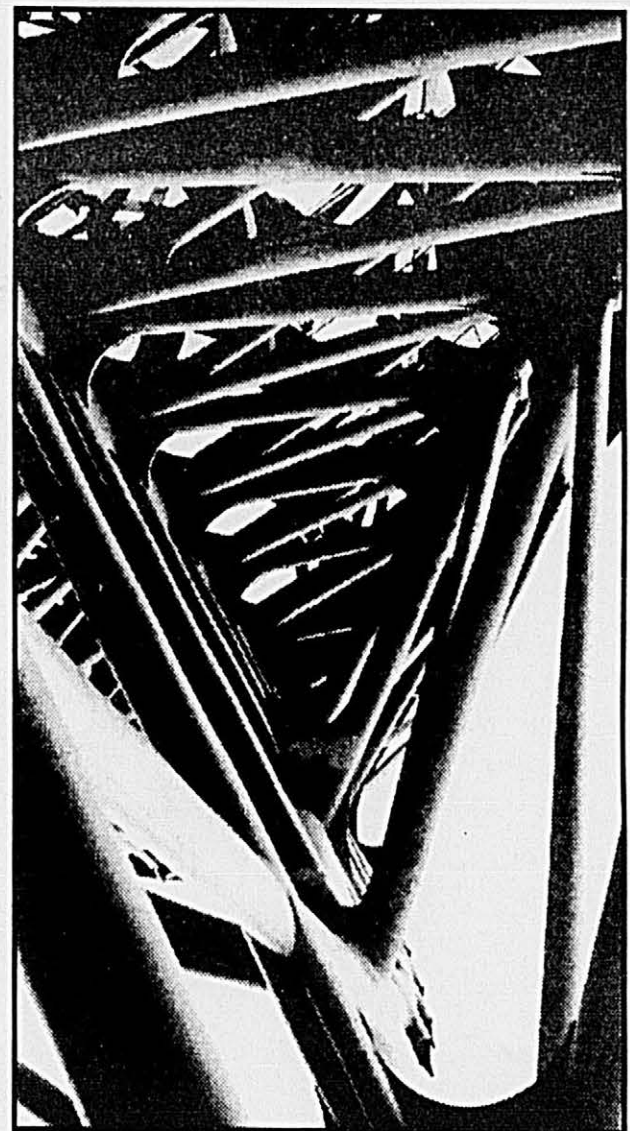
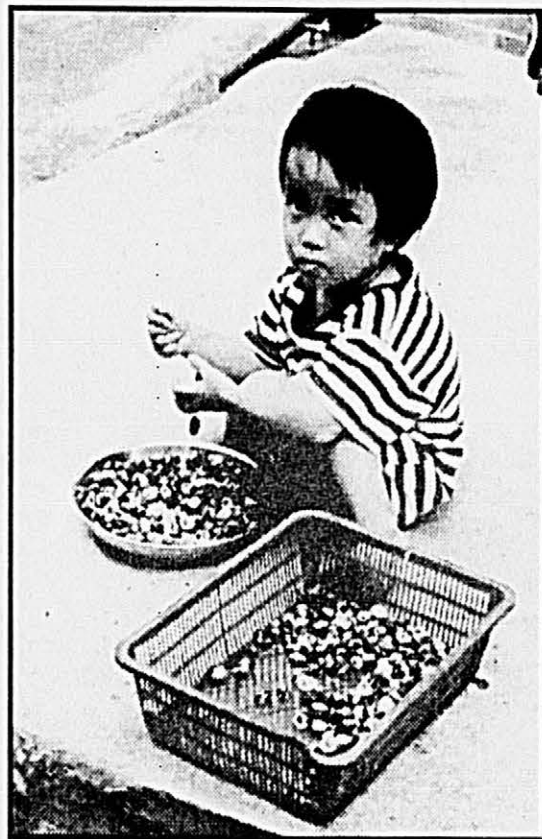
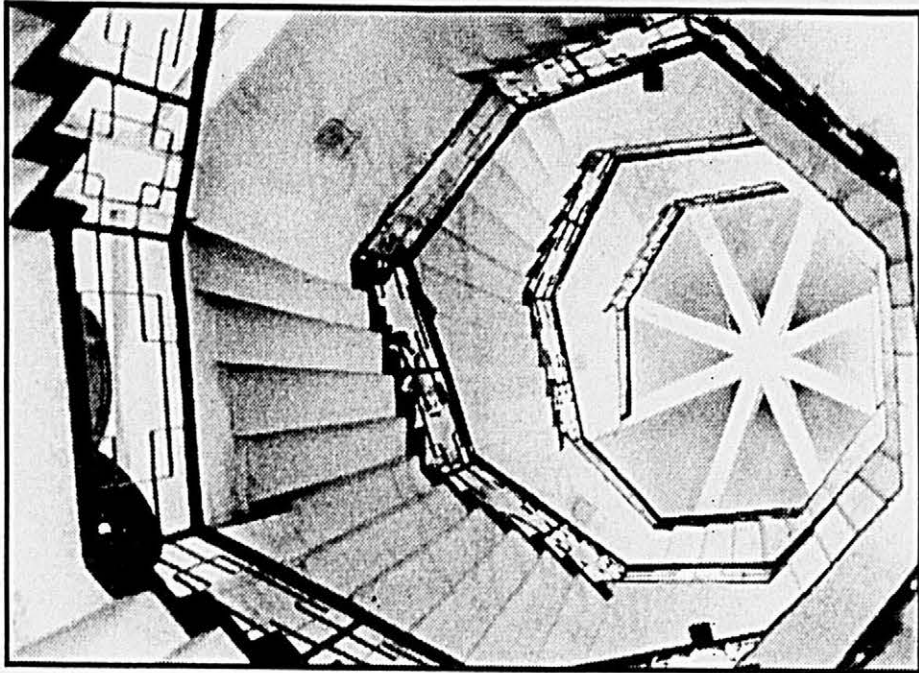
*With files from Le Devoir, the Globe and Mail, New Scientist, and The Guardian.*



# Anticipating the Uncertain

BY JANIUS TSANG

These pictures, taken during my travels in Taiwan and Hong Kong, remind me of the bittersweet anticipation that comes when one awaits an uncertain, intangible desire. It is a limbo between hope and expectation, the feeling that assaults a dead soldier's lover as he waits for her to never appear. The faces convey stony hopes, bewilderment, and fatigue that persists like a geometric pattern. It is an interminable wait, anticipating the uncertain.







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# A Modern Day Cyrano

## Autumn Tale explores love and romance

BY GABE FLORES

**A**utumn Tale is the latest installment of director Eric Rohmer's "Tale of the Four Seasons", a tetology that has already produced the critically acclaimed Summer Tale. While each film stands on its own, the storylines in all revolve around the central theme of love and romance.

Entwined in the love motif runs a concurrent theme of an older woman, Magali (Béatrice Romand) who is the subject of her friend's attempts at marrying her away. She is forty-five, a recluse, and set in her ways with little hope of meeting a soul-mate. In fact, Isabelle (Marie Rivière), her best friend since early childhood, claims that Magali hopes a man will simply "materialize." At several points throughout the film, perhaps it would have been preferable to have a man materialize, for Magali's noodling seems both rehearsed and unnecessarily adolescent. Once more, the chemistry between Magali and Isabelle, her best friend who is conspiring to set-up Magali, comes off as artificial at first, especially considering these are two women supposedly familiar with each other.

The inconsistency in acting is offset by Rosine (Alexia Portal), who is Magali's son's girlfriend. Once again, while the first scenes with both Magali and Rosine are

comes off as a natural. Furthermore, her character has depth, coping with both an inept boyfriend, Léo (Stéphane Dannon) and her ex-lover/ex-philosophy professor Étienne (Didier Sandre).

Rosine's dilemma lies in how to appease her boyfriend while trying to set-up Magali with Étienne. It should be mentioned that Rosine and Magali have an even closer relationship than a mother and daughter, sharing secrets and some of the more intense moments in the film. In her ideal world,

Rosine would like to set up Étienne with Magali, leaving her to reap the benefits of having a content best friend and an ex-lover at arm's length.

(Alain Libolt). A timid fellow, Gérald is Magali's male equivalent, a divorcee, established man with no firm roots or

hang-ups. He has nothing to lose, wearing his heart on his sleeve throughout the film. His character evokes a tempered sympathy, if not for his solitude, then for his shameless attempts at finding a companion. Not to be



Magali (left) and Isabelle (right) sharing a moment

confused with desperation, Dibolt's character has a pride that also contributes to the character's richness, leaving little doubt that his charisma could charm any woman. Once more, Libolt's few scenes helped compensate for a generally amateur casting.

Rohmer, one of the old school directors, now in his seventy-ninth year, exercises little control over the manner in which his characters communicate their message. His laissez-faire direction shows itself on several occasions throughout the movie, revealing some of the film's shortcomings. However, the storylines are tied together seamlessly in the finale, with the actors moving comfortably around each other and Magali contented by the man that proves to be a perfect match.

*Autumn Tale is currently playing at Cinema du Parc.*



Everyone meets, Isabelle (left), Gérald (center) and Magali (right)

painful to watch, it becomes clear that Alexia Portal is comfortable in her role and

Running parallel to this storyline is Isabelle's ploy to set-up Magali with Gérald

## CD Reviews

Sloan  
Between the Bridges  
(Universal)

Speaking of The Beatles, Halifax's Sloan has released their fifth album, *Between the Bridges*. Canada's favourite retro band picks up where they left off from their last album, *Navy Blues*, that is, somewhere around 1975. Sloan has matured in the last eighteen months however and by that I mean they've gotten soppier. They are decidedly more pop than rock on the new album, which was not the case on *Navy Blues*, though the harmonies are equally off. "Friendship" and "Sensory Deprivation" are a couple of classic Sloan, rough-around-the-edges kind of tunes on the new record, but for the most part the songs are pretty smooth and non-descript. They don't rip anyone off directly, like Lenny Kravitz has been accused of doing. But ultimately, this new Sloan album only confirms their blatant



lack of originality, especially since there don't seem to be any catchy singles to divert your attention, like "Money City Maniacs" and "She Says What She Means" did for Navy Blues. In fact, even after a close listen, I found myself unable to hum any of the tunes from *Between the Bridges*. It has also been well documented that Sloan, like The Tragically Hip, haven't been able to solve the American market. If they weren't able to do it with a solid album like *Navy Blues*, which included two singles that just screamed for radio play, they certainly won't do it with *Between the Bridges*. -Joshua Beitel

The Beatles  
Yellow Submarine Soundtrack  
(EMI)

Just when you thought the Apple Corporation had no more Beatles stuff worth sending over the ocean, here comes a new soundtrack to the triply mediocre film, *Yellow Submarine*. This time around, it includes fifteen Beatles songs from the movie, not just the six specifically recorded for it. Once more, they've all been digitally remastered and remixed. I must admit, the sound quality is quite remarkable, and you don't need any sophisticated music equipment to enjoy it. Unless you're

still converting your vinyl Beatles collection to CD. However, there's really no need for you to buy the new soundtrack, since most of the songs can be found on other albums like Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band and Magical Mystery Tour. The new *Yellow Submarine* is an interesting compilation of songs, if nothing else, made up of both hits like Eleanor Rigby and Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds, and less known tunes like the playful All Together Now. Unfortunately though, what you're paying for here is the packaging and the hype, which isn't surprising since it's not like The Beatles did anything new for the album. I may like every song on the album, with their new sound engineering by the computer nerds working on them, but all it amounts to is just another shameless attempt by Apple Corps to milk a little more money out of poor, confused, nostalgic, middle-aged Beatles fans. And that's just wrong, isn't it? -Joshua Beitel



## Book Review

### Awards Don't Mean Nothing

*Acclaimed novel about Newfoundland's first premier disappoints*

THE COLONY OF UNREQUITED DREAMS

WAYNE JOHNSTON

562 PAGES

\$19.95

**U**pon its publication in 1998, Wayne Johnston's *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* received lavish praise and awards. Winning the 1998 Thomas Raddall Atlantic Fiction Award and the 1999 Canadian Authors Association Award for Fiction, this semi-historical account of the life of Joe Smallwood was also chosen by the Critic's Pick as one of the year's top ten books. Yet for all its acclaim, the book did little to live up to the expectations.

For the most part, *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* follows the life and career of Joe Smallwood, the first premier of Newfoundland. Growing up in poverty with an alcoholic father, Smallwood is pressured into leaving high school. He then discovers the virtues of Socialism, and moves to New York City to work on the Call, a famous socialist newspaper. After spending the last of his money and being forced to sleep on a park bench for three weeks,

their lives. The frustration of this relationship permeates both their private and professional lives, and leaves an indelible mark on Smallwood's career.

The book is effective in two ways. For one, it provides a relatively easy way in which to swallow history of Newfoundland. Similarly it provides an entertaining biography of Joe Smallwood, although the fictionalized love story often makes it difficult to separate fact from fiction.

Yet the historical merit of the book does little to enhance its quality as a work of literature. Though Johnston takes great pains to give Smallwood a more personal side that readers can relate to, it is very difficult to fully sympathize with the protagonist. His motives behind his decisions, especially in relation to Fielding, never quite make sense or seem believable. Likewise the tortured relationship between Fielding and Smallwood becomes ridiculously complicated as the book progresses, and simply serves to tire the reader. As Johnston creates their entire relationship out of imagination, it is hard to understand why he constructs such implausible scenarios. The intricate twists and mysteries of this storyline fall short of weaving an epic romance, if that is what Johnston intended.

While the main characters, Smallwood and Fielding, cannot truly be described as flat, Johnston seems to use the minor characters as mere props along which to move his story. Characters such as Prowse and Squires seem to represent stereotypes, the egocentric wealthy and the power-hungry politician, and thus appear somewhat unbelievable and even inconsequential to the reader. The result of this is a somewhat two-dimensional world in which minor characters are strictly utilitarian and some of the potential richness of the story is lost.

The most enjoyable part of the work appears in Fielding's journal entries, which appear frequently throughout the chapters. It is these personal, heartrending musings alone that give the characters, Fielding in particular, any depth. The letters' interruption of the text combined with the historical explanations also serve to break up Smallwood's otherwise continuous stream of narration, thus speeding up the pace of the book and peaking the reader's interest when it might otherwise have begun to wane.

Overall the book is a relatively enjoyable and fast read. It gave an interesting background for the history of Newfoundland and introduced a memorable, if perplexing and convoluted, love story. Although Johnston's novel contained flaws in character development it deserves recognition if for nothing other than the fact that it aspires to and mostly succeeds in accomplishing so much. - Megan Foley



he moves back to Newfoundland.

Back at home he campaigns for workers' rights by trying to establish a railroad union, walking across the whole of Newfoundland to obtain signatures and donations.

The remainder of the book focuses on Smallwood's many unsuccessful attempts to break into politics before finally joining the Confederation bill and becoming Newfoundland's first premier.

The narrative of the novel is periodically interrupted by excerpts from a supposed historical work on Newfoundland. Intrinsic also to the novel is the fictionalized love story of Smallwood and Sheilagh Fielding, a cynical newspaper columnist. Spanning nearly five decades, their 'unconsecrated' love affair begins shortly after they both drop out of high school, and lasts throughout the rest of



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## New Cinema, Vintage Festival

BY ALEX AYLETT

The 28th edition of the Montreal International Festival of New Cinema and New Media begins tonight. Running until October 24, the festival features fifty new media productions and over one hundred films. Atom Egoyan, Jim Jarmusch, and Aki Kaurismaki are among the directors whose work will be shown. News From China, is one of four special programs to be presented within the selection of international films. Four of these directors will be on hand, including Wang Xiaoshuai, whose piece Frozen reveals Peking's radical underground art community. It will be an interesting counterpoint to the Chinese government's garish festivities last week, celebrating fifty years of Communist rule. Other special programs are Nouvelle(s) Vague(s), a collection of Nouvelle Vague films from Quebec, Britain, and Brazil. Tribute To Pelechian, pays homage to the Armenian film virtuoso, and Portraits, a film about the Saltmen of Tibet and farting, among other things. With artists from Germany, Israel, Holland, Great Britain, Japan, the United States, Spain, Austria, and Canada, the New Media presentations are equally impressive. Afasia is a multi-media interpretation of Homer's Odyssey with real time manipulation of robots, sound, light, and projected images. Tilt, the festival finale, brings together seven performers for an evening of media-overload, including audio-visual "film scratching" from the German/Israeli duo Ron and Safy. Free shows by local DJs follow most performances.

Film screening will by in the Ex-centris complex, 3536 St-Laurent, and New Media presentations will be in the Media Lounge at 2111 St-Laurent. Films are \$7, shows \$7,\$14,\$21. For more info call: 847-1242 or visit [www.fcmn.com](http://www.fcmn.com)

## Interested in writing?

Culture Meetings,  
Thursdays 4pm

News Meetings,  
Mondays 5 pm

Daily office, Shatner  
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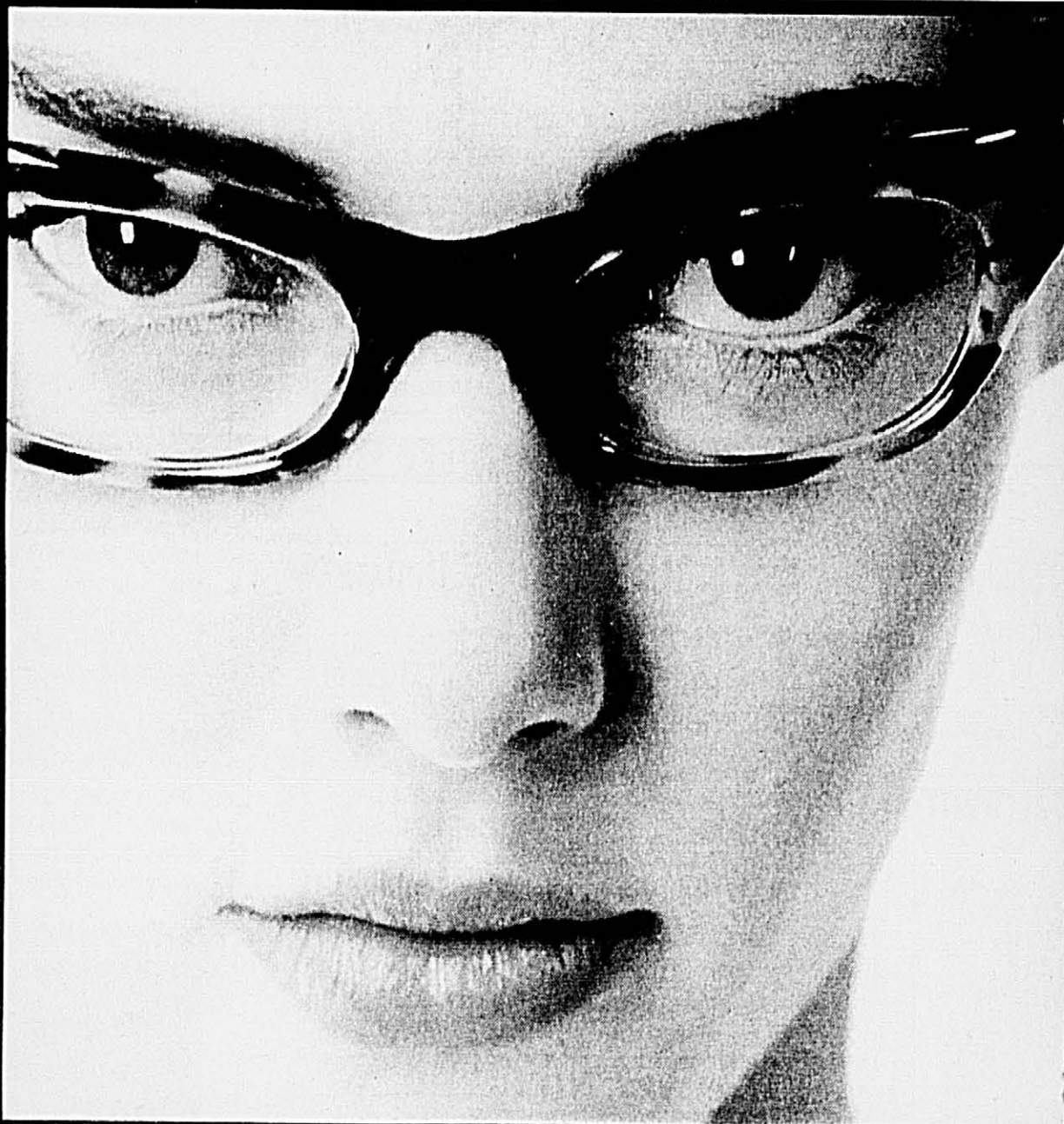
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